



A Short History of Landcare at Absalom Reserve



Port Macquarie
Landcare



This project commenced in 2009

**Volunteer hours for this site are
3,720 @ \$37 per hour = \$137,640**

**Funding received is \$9,542 from
NRMA, HCCU and Council's
Community Grants**

**Returned to Council at Ecological
Maintenance December 2012**

Absalom Reserve is bordered by Livingstone Road between Beech Tree Circuit and Wiruna road in the North and Ocean Drive in the South.

This site is a Subtropical Floodplain Forest which is an Endangered Ecological Community or EEC, it is the last fragment left on this creek on public land. The first works carried out was to increase its size and repair its edges to help it resistant to future weed invasion.

Records from the Port Macquarie Koala Preservation Society show Koalas move along this corridor through urban areas from Transit Hill to Lake Innes Nature Reserve. The koala population is declining due to the loss of habitat contributing to starvation, the main reason for Koala admissions to the KPS hospital. Habitat loss causes stress and disease and increases the time koalas are on the ground moving between trees, exposing them to predators and injury from cars or dogs. Port Macquarie's human population growth is one of the fastest in the state, creating pressure to remove trees. The tree planting in Absalom helps to reinforce the link between feeding areas, provide refuge from predators, a place to rest as well as in a small way: offsetting tree losses.

Neighbours have appreciated the works carried out and our interaction with them has started a cascade of environmental benefits wider than the reserve itself. After we removed 10 large Cocos Palms at the top of the reserve, a neighbour set about removing his, whilst another has been to the Landcare Community Nursery to purchase plants for his garden to compliment what we have done in the reserve.

A threatened tree species Biconvex Paperbark or *Melaleuca biconvexa* is declining due to habitat loss and invasion by weeds. This population of Biconvex Paperbark regularly sets seed which is rare over most of its range outside Port Macquarie.



This map shows how the reserve is surrounded by suburbia putting many stresses on the reserve, from careless dumping and inappropriate use of the Public Land by residents. Landcare and Council has seen improved neighbour behaviour as the results of the works have become visible.

At the behest of a local resident Landcare became involved with the restoration of this site. The first working bee was a Corporate Day involving staff from local businesses, neighbours and Landcare volunteers where a 2.4 h site that was previously mowed by Council was revegetated to enhance the Subtropical Floodplain Forest. The Council had difficulty mowing this site due to the springs that led to bogged equipment on a regular basis. This restoration freed up Council resources for their works in other areas, saving money for the rate payers.

The preparation of the site was done by Council removing many large Coco Palms and an edge that was all Lantana, Senna and Wild Tobacco Trees.



Before works commenced in 2009



At the end of the Corporate Day.



As it is today 2013, 2.4h returned to forest.

After weed removal, many plants were needed to repair the degraded corridors, the funding from the Council Community Grants and the NRMA assisted with this. The plants are grown from seed collected locally at the Landcare Community Nursery and over 1,000 extra plants were donated to this site by Landcare from the funds raised by public sales of plants from the Nursery.



Weed removal by Conservation Volunteers



Making way for this healthy corridor



The mown strip in front of the existing trees was detrimental to the corridor so was planted out with the help of the Green Gym team who joined Landcare after learning to love what we do with the CVA Green Gym team. The growth of these plants have extended the width of the corridor making it safer for wildlife and improving the health of the corridor



The Eastern Water Dragon is a regular sight in Absalom Reserve

Changes in Landcare saw a new team take over at Absalom, Rex Moir and his crew of dedicated volunteers extended the restoration of the reserve into the stormwater inlet at Livingstone Road and the road reserve at Ocean Drive.



Large scale weeds removal done by the team in the road reserve along Ocean Drive .



Large Asparagus Fern was prevalent on the site



Numerous seeds from the Cocos Palms

The removal of 10 Cocos Palms at the very top of Livingstone Road by Port Tree Fella with the aid of funding from the NRMA and the 6 that Council removed prior to the Corporate Day, has gone a long way to saving this catchment from this weed. The trunks were left on site to become habitat for insects and frogs.

The removal of the Cocos Palms created an open area that has been revegetated and increased the diversity on this site. The Cocos Palms attract cockroaches, everyone wins from the removal of this weed.



This previously mown area in the drain inlet has been revegetated to contain erosion and create habitat for small birds and mammals



The stormwater flowing under Livingstone road through, (the soon to be large native grasses) to filter the runoff on its way to Lake Innes Nature Reserve



The Team were called upon to rescue this Eastern Water Dragon, (shot with a nail gun) this story had a happy ending with it being released back to the reserve after treatment at the local Vet.



The Team receiving information from Council Bush Fire Officer Mel Losh, to increase their understanding of the issues of working close to houses

The finishing touches to the Reserve were done in 2012 ready for Landcare to move onto other projects, we make sure it is not all hard work and morning tea is the time to relax and socialise



Santa came to visit the reserve in the form of the very camera shy Rex Moir (who doubles as our professional photographer) and Bill Peel the council ecologist who we at Landcare work closely with. They left some large figs behind to grow to maturity without causing any issues for surrounding neighbours.

The final item, the signs installed to continue education of the public with funding from Holiday Coast Credit Union

